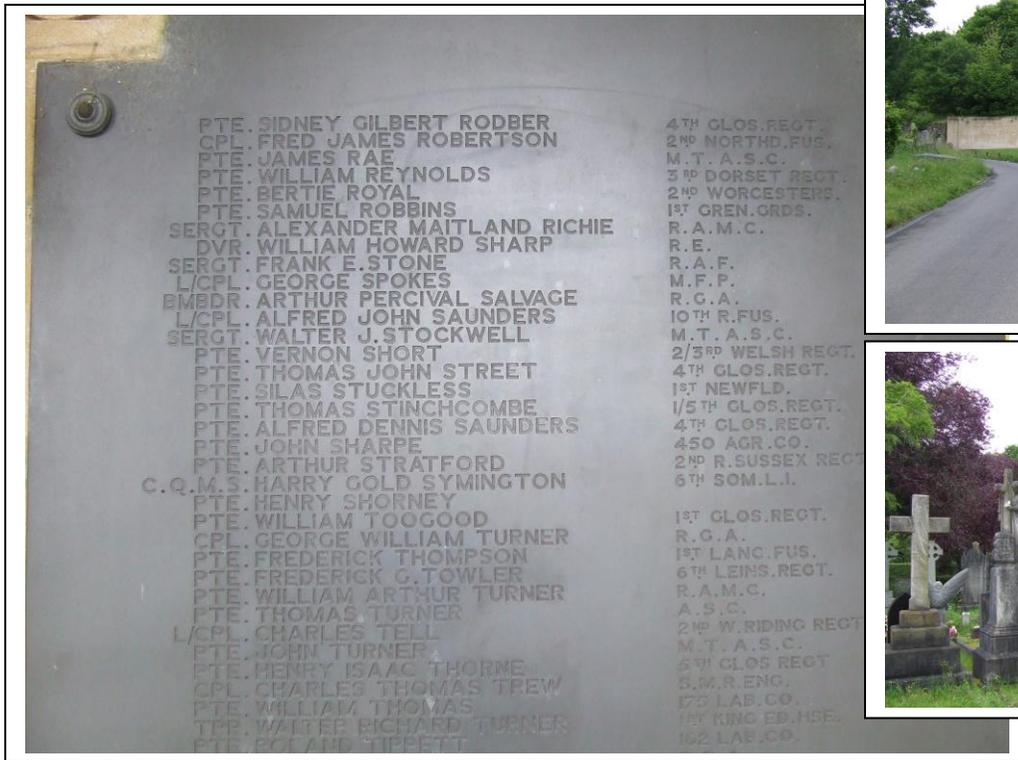


PTE. SILAS STUCKLESS

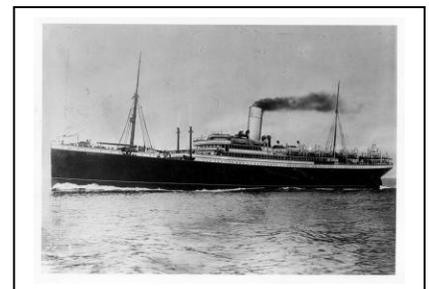


Private Silas Stuckless (Regimental Number 1669) lies in Bristol (Arnos Vale) Cemetery – Grave reference Screen Wall 5. 658.

His occupation prior to military service that of a lumberman, Silas Stuckless was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on June 25, 1915, before enlisting – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on the following day, June 26. He then attested sixteen days later again, on July 12.

*\*A second source has him attesting on the day of his enlistment.*

Private Stuckless and the other personnel of 'G' Company – apparently in the company of several naval reservists and also some German prisoners (these latter presumably to remain in Canada) - left St. John's by train on October 27, to cross the island to Port aux Basques. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry, and proceeded by train from North Sydney to Quebec City.



(continued)

At Québec the Newfoundlanders boarded His Majesty's Transport *Corsican* (preceding page) for the trans-Atlantic passage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.

By the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> the new arrivals had travelled by train and had gone north to Scotland. There they had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gales, not far removed from the new Regimental Depot where accommodation for the contingent was as yet not available.

That new Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland as the base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 – that the newcomers were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

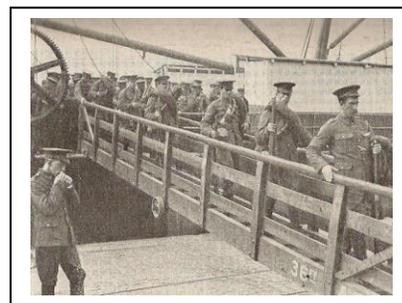


(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on April 5, and only three days before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Stuckless was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the War*\*.

*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On April 8, Private Stuckless, as a soldier of the 4<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on his way to report to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on the Continent. Arriving on that same day, the 8<sup>th</sup>, in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, the Draft was posted there for several days of final training and organization\*.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

*\*Apparently the standard length of time for this final training at the outset of the war had been ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

(continued)

Private Stuckless was one of the contingent of a single officer and thirty-two *other ranks* to report to the parent unit probably late in the day of May 4. The Newfoundlanders of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had already been in the area for three weeks and had finished their first tour in the trenches on only the previous day. On May 4 they were billeted in the village of Mailly-Maillet, just behind the lines.

(Right: *The re-constructed village of Mailly-Maillet – the French Monuments aux Morts in the foreground - is twinned with the community of Torbay, St. John's East. – photograph from 2009*)

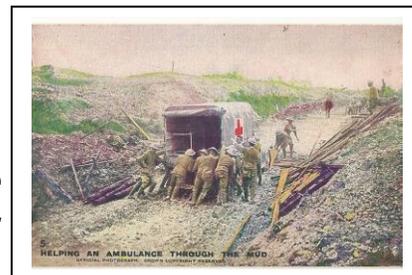


On July 1, 1916, he was wounded at Beaumont-Hamel (right) while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*. Private Stuckless was taken to the 87<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance with a *severe gun-shot wound* to the left hip, an injury which included a compound fracture of both the femur and hip. Evacuated from there to an un-identified casualty clearing station on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, he was again transferred, on this occasion on the following day, to the 1<sup>st</sup> General Hospital at Etretat.



(Right above: *a section of the re-constituted trench system in the Newfoundland Memorial Park of Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

(Right: *transferring sick and wounded from a field ambulance to the rear through the mud by motorized ambulance and manpower – from a vintage post-card*)



On July 6 Private Stuckless was placed on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Delta* (right) for the short crossing back to the United Kingdom. Having arrived in England, on July 9 he was admitted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern General Hospital in the city of Bristol.



Three days later, on July 12, the medical staff pronounced him to be *dangerously ill* and he underwent the amputation of the left leg.

The son of Isaac Stuckless, lumberman – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay - and Caroline Stuckless (née *Deer*, deceased by the time of the 1921 census) of Norris Arm, Lewisporte, he was likely brother to Richard and Dorman.

Private Stuckless was reported to have *died of wounds* on July 18, 1916.

He was buried in Arnos Vale in Grave 658, Square A. A.. (At a later date a common grave was inaugurated and the present arched Screen Wall – seen above - was constructed.)

Silas Stuckless had enlisted at the age of twenty-four years and five months.

(continued)

**Private Silas Stuckless was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).**

